

<https://doi.org/10.31470/2706-7904-2021-16-170-174>

PERCEPTION OF TEACHER'S LEADERSHIP BY PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TEACHERS IN KAZAKHSTAN

Восприятие педагогического лидерства будущими и действующими учителями в Казахстане

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Abstract

The study describes the content and structure of the concept of teachers' leadership from the pre-service and in-service teachers' perspective. The method of obtaining data is a free-associative experiment with the registration of answers given to the verbal stimulus "teachers' leadership". The results are presented in the form of an associative field where we distinguish the nucleus, near, far, and outer periphery, compiled based on frequency analysis of the respondents' reactions. By cognitive analysis of the associative field "teachers' leadership" in the verbal consciousness of the pre-service and in-service teachers, semantic zones in its structure are distinguished.

Keywords: *teachers' leadership, free associative experiment, pre-service and in-service teachers, Kazakhstan.*

Introduction

Вступление

Leadership is the complex product of genetic and environmental influences, where the latter offer a greater relevance (Bernal-Guerrero, Cangue, 2021). The weight of experience and learning means that most people can develop leadership-related characteristics through daily practice and apply them to public commitment. People are not born as leaders, though certain leaders have life experiences, which contribute to developing specific attitudes and personal skills for leadership (Avolio et al., 2009). Institutions prosper when leaders center themselves on what is important and sustainable (Hargreaves et al., 2006). As leadership is the driving force of the organizational development of educational institutions (Leithwood et al., 2008; Day et al., 2010), the ability to drive, achieve, and

improve its resources, and create structures that facilitate a culture of collaboration and professional development (Mulford, 2006).

In this respect it is important to investigate the perception of teachers' leadership from the perspective of the stakeholders of the educational process – pre-service and in-service teachers.

The aim of our study is to describe ways of conceptualizing *teachers' leadership* by the master's degree students of K. Zhubanov Aktobe Regional University majoring in foreign language teaching, and modeling the associative field of the concept. Exploring the associative meaning of a word is based on a psycholinguistic study of concepts. Verbal associations represent internal content of consciousness, and identify the national and cultural specificity (Dmitryuk & Arynbayeva, 2020). The method of a free-associative experiment allows us to reveal mental images of the external world inherent in representatives of a certain group. Used to reveal the private world of an individual in psychological science (Nielsen & Ingwersen, 1999), the associative experiment, at present, has gained recognition as an effective applied method of research, and is widely used in sociology, computational linguistics, theory of communication, teaching of foreign languages, logic, political science, etc. (Mukhametzyanova & Shayakhmetova, 2014).

Methods and Techniques of the Research *Методы и методики исследования*

A free associative experiment was conducted among master's degree students of the K. Zhubanov Aktobe Regional University, Aktobe, the Republic of Kazakhstan in September 2021. Participants were native speakers of Russian and Kazakh languages. The total number of respondents is 29 people aged 21–47 years, of which 2 are males, and 27 are females. The stimulus “teachers' leadership” was offered orally. The respondents issued in writing the first associations with it that came to mind. The number of reactions was not limited.

Based on the frequency of the response words, the core (identified by reactions from more than 20% of subjects), the near periphery (10%–20%), the far periphery (less than 10%), and the outer periphery (individual associations) were determined. The lexical associations were further categorized into meaningful clusters, as the clusters of response words can be considered as an indication of the respondent's (un)conscious understanding of the relevance and relationship between the stimulus concept and the concepts revealed by the test (Nielsen & Ingwersen, 1999).

Results *Результаты*

In the course of the free-associative experiment, 135 associative reactions were received, of which 73 were different. The associative field of the concept “teachers’ leadership” containing the core, near, far, and outer periphery was modelled (see Table 1).

Table 1

The associative field teachers’ leadership in the linguistic consciousness of pre-service and in-service teachers

Core	creativity (creative) (44.8%), competence (27.6%), education (17.3%), development (development of knowledge, teaching; professional development), leader, mastery (skill), quick-witted, responsibility, smart, support (13.8%)
Near periphery	intelligent, inventive, knowledge, modern, persistent (10.4%)
Far periphery	achieving goals, ambitious, authority, experience, information provider, innovation, professionalism, well-mannered (6.9%)
Outer periphery	ability, able to learn himself, achievement, advisor, always ready to independently resolve any situations, assessor, challenging, class team, communication, craftsmanship, cultural, disciplined to reach high study goals, diversity, effective methods, earning new techniques, emotional intelligence, exchanging efficient ideas, facilitator, focus on unified vision, gives direction, hardworking, helps, highly qualified, high quality of teaching, individual approach to students, kind, leads to success, make friends with educators, motivation, multiple study methods, new technology, specificity, personality, power, preparation, prompter, purposefulness, respect, strategic, strategic action, strong vision, students’ results, success, teaching, the desire to go forward, tolerance, understanding need for changes, unique, using new technologies, value of competitiveness, working to succeed

As a result of the cognitive analysis of the associative field “teachers’ leadership” in the linguistic consciousness of the pre-service and in-service teachers, we distinguished the following semantic zones where the order of the components is determined by their number. Associations in semantic zones are given in decreasing order of their frequency:

Personal characteristics (50 – 37.1%): creativity (creative) (13), quick-witted (4), responsibility 4, smart 4, intelligent 3, inventive 3, modern 3, persistent 3, ambitious 2, well-mannered 2, cultural, hardworking, kind, motivation, specificity, personality, power, tolerance, unique.

Strategy and management (19 – 14.1%): achieving goals 2, able to learn himself, authority 2, innovation 2, always ready to independently resolve any situations, communication, disciplined to reach high study goals, diversity, focus on unified vision, make friends with educators, purposefulness, respect, strategic action, strong vision, the desire to go forward, understanding need for changes, value of competitiveness.

Professional skills (18 – 13.3%): competence 8, leader 4, professionalism 2, ability, emotional intelligence, highly qualified, strategic.

Results of work (17 – 12.6%): mastery 4, knowledge 3, experience 2, achievement, craftsmanship, effective methods, high quality of teaching, multiple study methods, new technology, students' results, success.

Relationship with students (16 – 11.9%): support 4, information provider 2, advisor, assessor, class team, facilitator, gives direction, helps, individual approach to students, leads to success, prompter, teaching.

Development and life learning (15 – 11.1%): development (development of knowledge, teaching; professional development) 4, education 5, challenging, earning new techniques, exchanging efficient ideas, preparation, using new technologies, working to succeed.

Conclusions

Выводы

We believe that this psycholinguistic (free-associative) experiment aimed at describing the concept of “teachers’ leadership” in the minds of master students – pre-service and in-service teachers, is a valuable source of information and an effective tool for determining the content of concepts in different social groups.

The associative experiment showed that “teachers’ leadership” has an extensive associative field (135 reactions), which proves its importance for the linguistic consciousness of the representatives of educational field. A number of individual reactions testify to the significant role of the subjective perception of teachers’ leadership by the pre-service and in-service teachers. The associative field in both languages is divided into meaningful zones without the remainder. The associative field “teachers’ leadership” has 6 semantic zones that characterize various aspects of understanding the concept by the representatives of educational field: “personal characteristics”, “strategy and management”, “professional skills”, “results of work”, “relationship with students”, “development and life learning”. When comparing semantic zones, the quantitative symmetry of their associates is noteworthy. The most voluminous semantic zone in the associative field “teachers’ leadership” is the group that includes personal characteristics of a teacher. The most prominent components of this zone are creativity, quick-witted, responsibility, and smart. Further comes the group that describes strategy and management in the work of a teacher with the components – achieving goals, able to learn himself, authority, and innovation.

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